

Please amend claim 23 as follows:

23. (AMENDED) A method for steam sterilizing a fire sprinkler system comprising

✓ isolating a section of a water distribution pipe in a fire sprinkler system for the delivery of steam, wherein said water distribution pipe includes a plurality of heat-sensitive sprinkler heads and contains water,

? removing the water from said section of the system,  
? utilizing a temperature sensor to detect the temperature at a position in said section of the system,

A1 ✓ inactivating the sprinkler heads during the delivery of the steam by removing said sprinkler heads and replacing them with temporary fittings,  
? delivering said steam into said section for a duration at a temperature and in an amount sufficient to kill microorganisms and sterilize the section, and returning said sterilized section in the system to operation.

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration of claims 23-31 is respectfully requested for the following reasons. As indicated above, claims 1-22 have been cancelled without prejudice.